



Group Corvair Comments

GROUP CORVAIR'S NEWSLETTER FOR THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA



VOLUME LIV, No. 9

September 2026



I Think They're Hungry!

Jerry Yates' and Jim & Marolyn Simpson's Corvairs at a local show.

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

September

- 15 -- Group Corvair On-Line Meeting. 7:30 p.m. Look for an email with the Zoom link instructions.
- 19 – 47th Annual Corvair Day. 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. rain or shine. Hosted by the Central PA Corvair Club at the Eastern Museum of Motor Racing, 100 Baltimore Rd., York Springs, PA. For more information and to register: <https://www.centralpacorvairclub.org/events-1> Scroll down to the Corvair Day tab.
- 19 – 50th Edgar Rohr Memorial Car Meet, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m., Historic Manassas Rail Depot, 9431 West St., Manassas, VA. For more information: <https://bullrun.aaca.com/> The web site provides a QR code to scan.

October

6, 7 or 8 – Group Corvair Social meeting. Randy Ricktor is setting up our next social meeting and polling the members as to which date and time (lunch or dinner) works best. Keep an eye out for an email with the final date and time.

17 – Rockville Antique and Classic Car Show. **Registration is now open and you must pre-register. No on-site registrations!** 8:30 a.m. the gates open to show cars; **all** cars must be on the field by 11:00 a.m. when the gates close. 3:00 p.m. show closes. Group Corvair is a sponsor for this show. It's one of the best and largest car shows in the immediate area with typically 12,000 spectators. It's restricted to antique and classic cars (up to 2001!) that represent their period, so no custom rods, trick trucks, or others that would be inauthentic. We'd like to have a huge Corvair turnout; the crowds really seem to love us. Go to <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/services/rockville-antique-and-classic-car-show/> for more information and to register.

20 — Group Corvair On-Line Meeting. 7:30 p.m.

GROUP CORVAIR 2026 Points of Contact

Group Corvair is going through a period of reorganization. Consequently, for the near future we will have neither a President nor a Vice-President. In addition, we are revising the Group Corvair By-Laws, last updated in 1983. In the interim, here are people you can contact about the club:

Jim & Marolyn Simpson
3845 Wayson Road, Davidsonville, MD 21035
301-262-0978 or 240-232-2820
simpsonj@verizon.net
MarolynSimpson1@gmail.com

Randy Ricktor
11605 Mirror Pond Ct.
Fulton, MD 20759-2305
443-388-3697
rrictor57@gmail.com

We will be editing the newsletter as well as handling the duties of treasurer (Jim) and secretary (Marolyn).

Randy will be organizing our periodic social gatherings.

Bob Hall, past president, HallGrenn@aol.com, Mark Shiffler, past vice-president, mshiphty@gmail.com.

From the Oval Garage

Bob Hall

I understand that our August meeting at the Burtonsville Green Turtle resulted in much discussion about how to move Group Corvair forward. Bob Walker was able to attend, but unfortunately Monica was still “under the weather” after a stay at the hospital. She was missed and we all wish her a continued, full recovery. Randy sent me an email volunteering to continue setting up and scheduling our monthly social meetings, which was much appreciated. Having two meetings a month: a business meeting and a more casual social gathering seems to work well for us. I've talked with other clubs over the years, and some have single meetings with a meal, general conversation then a business meeting, but in those cases their meetings last several hours.

As far as “From the Oval Garage” continuing, Dave Edsinger has volunteered to write for our October Group Corvair newsletter. With his decades of experience (adventures and misadventures) repairing and racing Corvairs Dave has a lot of insight to share. Phil Richardson has also volunteered to write if Jim gives him “a poke” to remind him. Now we just need to find a third volunteer to finish out 2026.....or vote in a new club president.

Phil Richardson has already got a start sharing our club bylaws for members to review. Keep in mind that they were first written when our monthly meeting drew 30 to 40 members who were keeping a lot of Corvairs that were daily drivers on the road. Times have certainly changed—now our cars are much more than low-cost transportation.

Titus Stewart called Jim and me a week ago to confirm that CORSA's accounting for the Gettysburg convention was moving forward and that Group Corvair and the other three sponsoring clubs would receive a report on expenses and profits in the near future. He also said that he has had discussions with CORSA about Mark Shiffler's recommendations for improvement to Concours: 1) allowing for challenges during the gap between judging and the

awards banquet for explanation/adjustment of scores and 2) assigning one judge per entrant to eliminate judging based on a left and right-side judge to better ensure consistent point tallies. Titus will keep us informed as CORSA continues to mull this over.

The Rockville car show is rapidly approaching and, as I write this, there are very few spaces left, so if you want to enter your Corvair do it now.

Looking forward to seeing all of you at our next meeting.

Minutes of the August Virtual Meeting

Marolyn Simpson

At 7:30 pm on Tuesday, August 18, 10 Group Corvair members met on Zoom for the monthly meeting. Various topics were discussed including the future leadership of the club. Bob Hall joined the group at 8:10 pm and called the meeting to order.

Jim Simpson gave the treasurer's report. Corsa will give us a token payment for the convention signs, but some of the signs will be donated to Corsa. The minutes of the July meeting were approved as written in the newsletter.

Mark Shiffler had ordered Group Corvair logo hats for the convention. There are three hats left and can be purchased for \$15 each. (Contact Mark directly if interested.)

Corsa convention profits will be distributed among the four sponsoring clubs (Central Pennsylvania Corvair Club, Northern Virginia Corvairs, Mid-Maryland Corvair Club, and Group Corvair). While we haven't made a formal decision, Group Corvair plans to turn most of its share back to Corsa.

There was a big thank you to Rob Neighbour for arranging and guiding the tour of the NS Savannah in Baltimore Harbor.

Jim and I attended the Rockville car show planning meeting on July 28. There will be no major changes in the show from previous years. However, the scheduled 2026 special display presented by the Mercedes-Benz Club has been cancelled – they couldn't get firm commitments on enough significant cars to make it worthwhile. But the special display for 2027 will be "Model T Fords – All Greater Than 100 Years Old." As in the recent past, all participants in the October show must be pre-registered.

Jim recently changed the brake shoes on his Corvair from Kevlar lined shoes to some semi-metallic lined ones sold by Dave Clemens and is much happier with them. (See the "Tech Tips" in the September issue of **Group Corvair Comments**.) A discussion on brakes followed.

The next social meeting will be on Wednesday, August 26 at 1:00 pm at the Green Turtle Restaurant in Burtonsville. *[Note: The meeting was held as scheduled.]*

Corvair Forum seems to be the go-to website for Corvair discussions and information; Virtual Vairs is not used as much.

The meeting ended at 8:50 pm.

Social Meeting at the Green Turtle

Marolyn Simpson

On Wednesday, August 26, Group Corvair held its social meeting at the Green Turtle in Burtonsville. As usual the meeting started with members admiring any Corvairs in the parking lot – this time Randy Ricktor's red convertible got the attention. Once again, we were able to make use of the private room at the restaurant. We had a good turnout with 11 members attending.

After enjoying the meal, the discussion turned to the future of Group Corvair. Since the club has shrunk in recent years, the by-laws as written do not really work anymore. They require many more positions than we currently have people to fill them. However, we still need at least a treasurer, someone to produce the newsletter, and someone to organize social events; in other words, a more informal structure. At least for the near future, Randy Ricktor has volunteered to take over the planning of social events, I will continue to write up the minutes of the meetings, and Jim will continue to do the newsletter and take care of the treasurer's duties.

Most of the attendees did say they would look at and make suggestions on revising the Group Corvair by-laws. (Phil Richardson has emailed that he has put the by-laws in a Google Docs folder. By the time you get this newsletter, you should have received an email inviting you to review and suggest updates to the by-laws.)

Other suggestions for the future of the club include a closer association with the Northern Virginia club and recruiting new members at car shows and other car events. However, the Northern Virginia club is mostly centered around tech sessions with a Christmas social event, whereas Group Corvair is mostly a social club (with a tech session scheduled when needed), and participation at car shows.

Wheels from the Past Car Show

Jim Simpson

Jerry Yates called and asked if we were interested in attending the “Wheels from the Past” car club charity car show on Saturday, the 5th of September. The weather forecast looked good, the location at the Green Turtle Restaurant in Edgewater was convenient, so we said, “why not, we’ll see you there.” I finished up putting my Corvair back together – I’d been working on swapping brakes – and got the car ready to go.

When we arrived bright and early on that Saturday, Jerry was already there and reserved a parking spot for us next to his Yenko tribute. Unbeknownst to us, Rick Fogarty was also coming to the show with his '64 Monza convertible (right). If we had known, we would have saved a third spot so we could have created a mini-Corvair show!



Rick Forgarty's '64 Monza

There was a steady stream of people looking at our cars. Besides the usual casual visitors, there were two people who seemed serious about acquiring a Corvair! One was looking for a late convertible, the other more likely a last coupe. I provided information on both Group Corvair and potential sources of cars, as well as one of my Group Corvair calling cards with contact information. Hopefully we’ll be hearing from them again.

A Yenko Mechanic Shares Tales from Inside the Shop



*(This article was originally produced by Hagerty Insurance, August 2026. It was shared from **SFBA CORSA** on August 31, 2026, To see the original article: <https://www.hagerty.com/media/people/a-yenko-mechanic-shares-tales-from-inside-the-shop/>)*

Warren Dernoshek didn't set out to work at what would become one of the most famous Chevy dealerships in the country. Back in 1966, Don Yenke hadn't begun to create his [now-legendary](#) big-block [Camaros](#), Chevelles, and Novas, an effort that started at his dealership and leveraged GM's Central Office Production Order (COPO) program. For Dernoshek, a young hot-rodder from western Pennsylvania, Yenke's Chevy dealership in nearby Canonsburg was simply a steady place to turn a wrench and take home a paycheck.



"When I got out of high school, I was living the dream," he says, a soft smile peeking from beneath his white mustache. "I was on my way to California for fame and fortune, so to speak, a friend of mine and I." After getting sidetracked in the oilfields of Texas and Kansas, and discovering California wasn't for him, Dernoshek made his way home to Pennsylvania. A buddy of his, George Furda, worked at Yenke Chevrolet as second-in-command of its fledgling performance shop, and he brought Dernoshek into the fold.

"They wanted to see that I had some mechanical skills, so they put me on a deal that lasted about a week just to throw some



problems at me. Evidently I passed the test," he chuckles. "So I stayed on for better or worse because it really didn't pay that well."

Dernoshek wound up working at Yenke for nearly 20 years, converting cars to Yenke spec, serving as a mechanic on the racing crew, and eventually managing the parts and service departments of Yenke's Saab dealership. Today, he works out of a brick-and-block garage that could not be more unassuming. Tucked behind a small office building and nestled between a patch of woods and a steep northwest Pennsylvania hillside, the shop in McMurray houses Yenke Stinger number 057, carts filled with air-cooled Chevy parts, and the memories of a man who helped build the cars that kicked off a '60s performance legend. I visited his shop, curious to hear what Yenke was like from the inside.

By the time he was hired on at Yenke's dealership, Dernoshek knew plenty about going fast in a straight line. As a car guy and a self-described "typical hot rodder of the day," he had a '40 Ford that he street raced. The Yenke team opened his eyes to an entirely different world.

Born in Western Pennsylvania to Slovenian parents, and an avid pilot, Don Yenke had been racing Corvettes on road courses since 1957 and had brought home national championships in the Sports Car Club of America (SCCA)'s B Production class in '62 and '63 behind the wheel of his '57 Corvette.



Don Yenke behind the wheel of a first-gen Corvette

"I can't say enough about him," says Dernoshak. "[Don] was a real special guy; he was a renaissance man. We're still talking about him 60 years later ... You talk about being a success; we'd all like to be thought of that way."

Don was a talented driver who took over a family dealership, but driving a race car and running a business weren't his only gifts. He also knew how to harness the right people to execute his vision. "He didn't want to be all things when it came to the cars," says Dernoshak. "[Don] was on another level of management as far as creating the whole effort...He didn't want to have the complete operation and all the problems that went along with it and the people and the expense of the machinery and everything else involved. He was real good at finding good people."

It didn't hurt that Yenke was a savvy dealmaker. "He made it happen—it was his character, his drive," says Dernoshak. "His compassion for sports-car racing blended with the fact that he had all kinds of connections with General Motors. He was on a first-name basis with all the executive force. They probably figured him to be a pain in the butt because he used to fly up to Michigan just for a meeting on the drop of a hat."

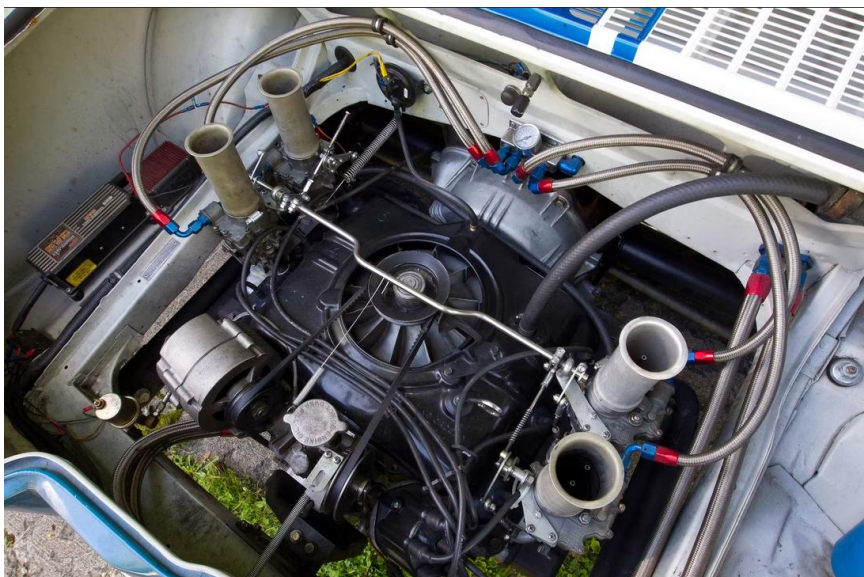
In 1966, Dernoshak found himself in this mix of high-energy leadership and the right bunch of workers. The first project he'd hop on would be part of an effort to win in the SCCA with a different formula—not with a burly 'Vette, but with an air-cooled six-cylinder mounted in the "wrong" end of a car.

In 1965, the year before Dernoshak was hired at Yenke Chevy, Don hatched the idea of taking the rear-engined Corvair racing in the SCCA's D-Production class. After tinkering with a 1965 Corvair Corsa and seeing its potential, Yenke ordered 100 Ermine White examples (there ended up being a few more prototypes in this first run, as well) to convert them to [Stingers](#) for SCCA homologation for the 1966 season. They arrived in December. By January, Yenke met the SCCA's requirements to allow his Stinger to race.

The Stinger was competitive right out of the box, especially in the hands of Jerry Thompson, a racer and engineer who had helped develop the car. "Yenke, being the smart guy he was, had tapped the resources of RST Engineering," recounts Dernoshak. Thompson and a couple of other GM engineers had created RST as a side gig. "They were the right guys, and they had been playing around with Corvairs for a few years. They did most, if not just about all, the R&D that went into the Stinger that Yenke had given to them." A year after the car's introduction, in 1967, Thompson captured the D-Production championship.

Meanwhile, the folks at Yenke Sportscars had their hands full Stinger-izing the Corvairs. "It was an intense deal because the building wasn't set up for any mass production of anything," says Dernoshak. "You see pictures of the Cobra and Mustang shop in California that they had going at the





same time”—he’s referencing Carroll Shelby’s facility—”and there’s a whole lot of cars and all this space and organization. That was absolutely not the case here. [At Yenko,] it was one segment of the building. You could get like three cars in it. You could jam maybe four, but you couldn’t really work on ’em. There was just a whole lot going on at the time.”

The 140-horse Corvair Corsas that rolled into Yenko’s cramped space that first year left in one of four stages of Stinger. All had their rear seats deleted to clear the SCCA hurdle that required “sports cars” to only have two seats, and all received fiberglass sail panels on the rear pillars along with a fiberglass deck lid with adjustable scoops.

For ’66, the cars got blue stripes over the Ermine White base, work that was mostly farmed out, given the small size of the Yenko body shop at the time. Dernoshek shares that they were able to add Koni shocks to the cars, but per SCCA rules, the springs and sway bars had to have a GM part number. (Given the stringent requirements of the sanctioning body, Yenko ensured the 100-car COPO order included factory options like a limited-slip differential, faster steering rack, and dual-circuit brake system.) The Yenko team was able to add a dollop of power, however.



Stage I’s performance tweaks involved improving the oiling system, tweaking the carbs, adding exhaust headers and stronger engine bearings, along with more subtle add-ons like a fan-belt tensioner. This step added 20 horsepower. Things got more serious after that.

“Stage I was mainly cosmetic stuff, but for stages two and three, the engine came out, and it was totally disassembled—camshaft changed, compression ratio raised,” says Dernoshek. A subcontractor handled all the necessary machining, and then the engines were reassembled in-house and reinstalled by the Yenko team. Stage II yielded 190 horsepower, and [Stage III](#) upped the ante to 220 with more compression and cylinders bored .040 over. The full-tilt Stage IV cars were stronger still, with another 20 horsepower, and were stripped down for competition use.

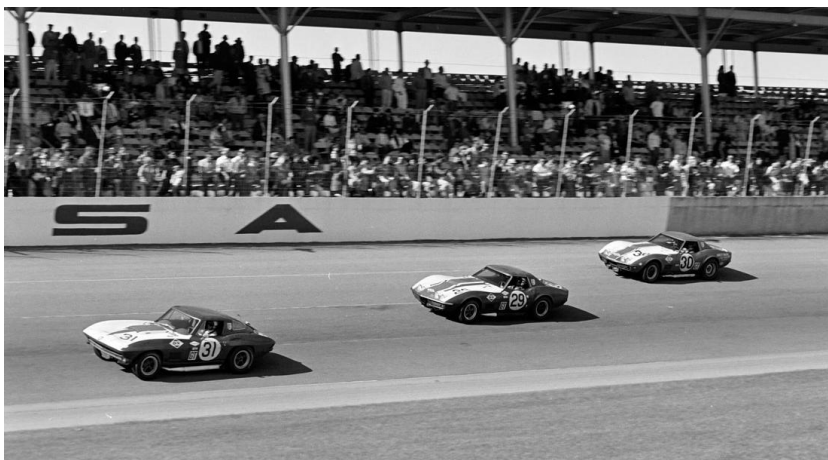
All the work happened under the watchful eye of Bill Hartley. A long-time employee of Yenko, and Don’s chief race mechanic from the very beginning, Hartley ran a tight ship. Dernoshek describes him, with obvious admiration, as “an absolute hard-ass.” He adds: “One of his sayings was—well, he had a lot of sayings, but one of

them was, 'I'm not always right, but I'm never wrong.' That pretty much explains Hartley. We ended up being real close in later years. If I had a mentor, it would have been him."

Hartley stayed extremely busy tuning cars, managing production, and working at the track. Before long, he enlisted Dernoshek as part of the race crew, too. "I'd never been around sports car racing before—it wasn't my thing," says Dernoshek. "I was just kind of an average guy, and the sports car element's a whole different deal. That's high and mighty. And I was not high *or* mighty."

Modest though Dernoshek is, Hartley must've seen something in him, because Dernoshek soon found himself part of the team that tended to the Sunray DX Corvette race cars, among which was the first L88-powered Corvette ever built. "That was the most significant deal I was involved with. It was really well-funded, with everything you needed to go racing and be a winner," he says. Indeed, the Yenko Sunray Corvettes took a class win at the 12 Hours of Sebring in '67, and a first, fourth, and fifth in class at the 24 Hours of Daytona in '68.

It was only Hartley, Dernoshek, and George Furda as the official mechanics, along with a small cadre of volunteers and friends, who worked on the cars and helped out during those long hours at the track. "Back then there were very few American teams in FIA-sanctioned events," shares Dernoshek. "To be as successful as we were, being an American entity in international racing, that was a lot to brag about." The team continued to find success outside of their relationship with Sunray DX, which ended in 1968, notching a win in the Citrus 250 at Daytona in '68 and class wins at the 6 Hours of Watkins Glen in 1970 and again at Daytona in 1971 before winding down its involvement in racing in the early '70s.



The Sunray DX Corvettes at the 24 Hours of Daytona in 1968

performance shop, Dernoshek is also well-versed in the big-block Camaros and Chevelles and Novas that made Yenko famous outside of sports-car circles, and his expertise is widely cited in the Yenko community. He stayed on with

Having been part of an intimate group in the





Yenko for about 20 years before starting his own shop. It seems, though, that the Stingers and his time with the racing side of the business etched him deepest.

Though he was not initially a sports car person, the Stinger has managed to maintain a place in Dernoshek's heart. The bay next to his desk houses Stinger 057, which Dernoshek built to Stage Four spec in his shop, and is "about as close as you'll get to period-correct." His son Logan still campaigns it in vintage racing.

Chassis 089, now fully developed into a track-day car, resides at Dernoshek's home. "It has a story of its own," he

shares. "I've had it since 1970, I believe, or '69. It had gone into demo service, and it blew an engine. Then it sat up behind the shop, and they lost their parking space behind that building next to the dealership. It had to go, so that's when I picked it up as-is. But it had never come into the shop to be converted—along with quite a few others, I would say." Today, 089 is well beyond a Stage Four. "It's a conglomeration of the collection of 50 years' worth of scrounging," chuckles Dernoshek.

It doesn't sound like Dernoshek has ever been much for letting grass grow under his feet; a few Corvair engines in various stages of assembly provide evidence that he's still at it. His time with Hartley and Furda, and the team's hardscrabble work ethic, surround him in the form of projects-in-progress and mementos of the success he helped achieve.





When I ask him what it was like to be a part of one of the biggest names in the history of American performance cars, he demurs.

“At the time, it was just the job. I’m not an intellectual—I’m a natural-born grease monkey, I guess. Most of this stuff is in retrospect because you’re just living in the moment, you know what I mean?”

As Dernoshek bids me goodbye and walks back into his shop, among those engines, I get the impression that he’s hopping right back into the moment.

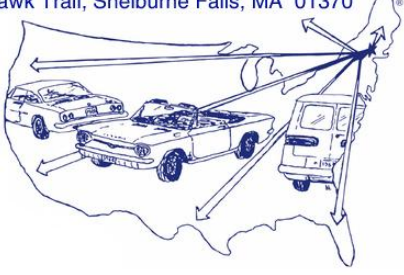


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